

REMARKS

With entry of this amendment, claims 1, and 3-12 are pending in the application. By this amendment, the remaining claims previously pending in the application have been cancelled, without prejudice, to advance the subject matter of the allowed claims to issuance. All of the amendments herein are fully supported by the specification, and no new matter has been added to the application. Entry of these amendments and reconsideration of the application is earnestly solicited.

Compliance of Information Disclosure Statement with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(1)

The Office has clarified the previous request that Applicant file a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement listing certain references that were cited in the original IDS filed April 1, 2002, and which were "not available" to the Office. Applicant notes that the Examiner has lined out those indicated references in the returned copy of the Form 1449, and that the other (non-lined) references have been initialed as considered by the Examiner. Applicant will provide copies of all remaining references along with a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement separately listing these references under separate cover so that these references will also be marked as having been considered in the application.

Allowed Claims

Applicant notes that the Office has reconsidered and withdrawn the prior rejections of claims 1 and 3-12, and indicated that the subject matter of these claims has been allowed.

Response to Outstanding Rejections

The Office has maintained or levied new rejections in the application against the remaining pending claims. Without acceding to the merits of the rejection, Applicant notes that these rejections are all rendered moot by amendment of the claims herein. In particular, the claims have been amended to direct the subject matter of the application to the allowed embodiments, while the remaining claims have been cancelled without prejudice. Subject matter thus withdrawn from the application is not relinquished by this Amendment, and Applicant reserves the right to pursue this subject matter in a related application.

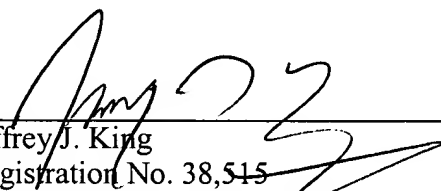
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant believes that all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 425.455.5575.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 21, 2004



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